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The Centennial Anniversary of the Public Schools of Philadelphia

The Central High School, East Side of Juniper Street, South of Market

1818 1918

The Centennial Anniversary of the Public Schools of Philadelphia

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A Recapitulation

by

JOHN P. GARBER

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THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF PHILADELPHIA

The public school system of Pennsylvania is the direct outgrowth of the Charity Schools established in our city and state for the education of indigent children. Although William Penn and many of the early immigrants were men of learning and strong advocates of general education, the hard conditions of the American wilderness were not favorable to its promotion. Besides the people were poor and the colony was divided by the religious and political controversies attendant upon the welding together of people from all lands and imbued with greatly divergent thoughts and practices. At the time of the Revolution the population of the state was only about 350,000 and was so widely scattered that there was little opportunity for strong initiative in any matter demanding the general interest and support of the people. However, such religious organizations as the Society of Friends, the Episcopalians and the Mennonites had kept alive the demands for education, and after the Revolution a more general interest was awakened in communities here and there which resulted in legislation for the establishment of private schools and colleges with certain opportunities for those unable to pay their tuition. In Philadelphia the influence of such institutions as the William Penn Charter School, the Germantown Academy, the Academy on Fourth Street, which afterwards became the University of Pennsylvania, and the schools established by the Episcopalians, began to be felt. But the direct movements leading to public education are to be found in the free classes started at first in connection with the Sabbath school work of the various religious denominations. A "Society for the Establishment of Sunday-schools" had been formed in the city and as early as 1792 had made an appeal to the Assembly for the passage of a law providing for a general system of education.

The Constitution of the State, which had been revised in 1790, contained two provisions for education which indicated a growing interest in the subject. They were as follows:

1. "The Legislature shall, as soon as conveniently may be, provide by law for the establishment of schools throughout the State, in such a manner that the poor may be taught gratis.

2. "The arts and sciences shall be promoted in one or more seminaries of learning."

In accordance with the latter, favorable legislation was soon secured for the establishment of a number of such "seminaries," several of them within the present limits of the city.

However, it was not until March 3, 1818, that the law was passed which virtually was the beginning of our present public school system in Philadelphia. The Board of Control, under whose charge the free education established by this law was placed, met for organization on the sixth day of April of that year. Hence it seems entirely appropriate for us now to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the public school system of our city even though the schools attended by the boys and girls of to-day are very different from the ones known then—just as in many respects our city is also different.

At that time the city extended only from the Delaware to the Schuylkill and from South Street to Vine Street, and most of the city west of Seventh, south of Pine and north of Vine was open country. The remainder of what is now included in Philadelphia was known as the Northern Liberties, Kensington, Southwark, Moyamensing, Passyunk, Penn Township, Spring Garden, Oxford, Lower Dublin, Byberry, Moreland, Bristol, Germantown, Roxborough, Blockley and Kingsessing. On the lamp posts surrounding City Hall is indicated the boundaries of these various districts and townships which now form a part of our city and which with the city itself were then known as "The City and County of Philadelphia." Under the new school law this was called "The First School District of the State of Pennsylvania," a name which it has borne ever since. The city and county was divided into seven "Sections," the city itself being "The First Section"; the Northern Liberties and Kensington, "The Second Section"; Southwark, Moyamensing, and Passyunk, "The Third Section"; and Penn Township, "The Fourth Section."

The schools of these four sections were placed in charge of "directors," who, in the city proper, were chosen by the Common and Select Councils and elsewhere were chosen by the Commissioners of the district or township. These directors, of whom there were twenty-four in the city, twelve in the Northern Liberties, and six in each of the other sections, were under the jurisdiction of "a select body" called "The Controllers of the Public Schools for the City and County of Philadelphia." This body was composed of men selected by their own members from each of the boards of directors and they had general supervision as well as general control of all the schools. The Controllers met for organization on the sixth day of April, 1818, and at once proceeded to establish schools for both boys and girls. In the city proper they established the "Model School," which was located on Chester Street and which was to serve not only as a school for instructing boys and girls, but also as a school for training teachers, it being the first school established for this purpose in the United States. In the Second Section they established the Adelphi School with two teachers and the Kensington School also with two teachers; in the Third Section the Moyamensing School with two teachers and the Southwark School with two. Both of these schools were in rented buildings. In the Fourth Section only a one-room school was established and it was also in a rented building.

The law required that the pupils be instructed under what was known as the Lancasterian System. This was a plan whereby one teacher assisted by the older pupils was considered sufficient for the instruction of three hundred pupils. This Monitorial System, as it eventually came to be called, was introduced by its originator, an Englishman named Joseph Lancaster, who also established the Model School on Chester Street. The plan had been adopted largely because of its cheapness, the average cost per pupil being less than four dollars per year, while where it was not in use the cost was then nearly ten dollars. It continued in general use in the city and the nearby districts until in 1838 when the President of the Board of Control, Thomas Dunlap, condemned it in his annual report by saying: "The fullest experience has induced the Controllers to question the efficiency of this arrangement, which they think cannot be defended on any but narrow and parsimonious views"—views which experience has shown work irremediable harm in educational affairs.

The Controllers determined the number of school houses that should be built and also their size and cost, although the Directors in the various districts supervised their erection. Twenty "respectable taxable citizens" could, by petition, compel a public hearing before the courts in regard to any additional schools they might desire. As there was at first no superintendent of schools, the Board of Control exercised general supervision over both teachers and pupils, although the Directors elected the teachers. The books and supplies needed for the pupils were furnished free then just as they are now.

In 1821 the schools of the other districts and townships of the County of Philadelphia were also placed in charge of the Board of Control. This increased the number of Sections to eight. Oxford, Lower Dublin, Byberry and Moreland were denominated The Fifth Section; Germantown, Bristol and Roxborough being The Sixth Section; Blockley and Kingsessing, The Seventh Section; and the township of Passyunk, The Eighth Section. By that time the first four sections had 7 schools with nearly 3000 pupils in attendance. Three years later this number had increased only 500, indicating a very slow growth in these schools. In order to learn to read and spell pupils were first taught the alphabet from A all the way through to Z and even including &c. What they were then taught in the schools is well indicated in the distribution of the above 3500 pupils. "Exclusive of the alphabet and spelling departments, and writers on slates, there are among these children 1728 in the reading, 899 in the paper writing, and 1474 in the arithmetic classes: in the latter branch, some have advanced to vulgar (common, to distinguish from decimal) fractions, and in several schools grammar and geography are successfully taught. Knitting and other useful needlework forms part of the instruction of the girls, and at one of the schools the plaiting of straw has recently been beneficially introduced." In geography the ability to point out places on the globe was regarded as the highest evidence of success. A great deal of interest was taken in the moral instruction of the pupils and much of the "paper-writing" was in imitation of moral and scriptural texts written at the head of the sheet by the teacher.

The Board of Control from the very earliest days made a special effort to instruct colored children. As this was long before the question of slavery became a great public issue, it

The Model School Building, East Side of Chester Street, North of Race

forms a matter of great credit to the Board of Control and the citizens who supported these schools. That the colored pupils made good use of the opportunity is indicated by the following report on their progress: "The proficiency of the colored children in the branches they are taught, and the orderly habits which they have acquired by attendance at school, promise the happiest results for society."

Although the Act establishing these free schools several times refers to them as "public schools," they were not such schools as we now know them. As early as 1790 the State began to pass laws for the free education of the poor, and Philadelphia had secured most of such legislation. While the law of 1818 was excellent in many respects, its purpose was simply to establish a better and less costly system of elementary schools for poor children than the plans then in vogue. It contained no provision for the education of any children at public expense except "indigent orphan children or children of indigent parents"—boys between 6 and 14 years of age and girls between 5 and 13. Hence these schools were "pauper schools" and as such people in general had no thought of sending their children to them; therefore, the greater part of the children of the city were then in private "pay schools." By the year 1834, however, a strong sentiment had developed that education was so essential to the welfare of the State, as well as so beneficial to the individual, that it should be made free to all. This was a new thought based on the idea that in a democracy education should be free, not because some could not otherwise secure its benefits, but rather because opportunities in such fundamental things must be as nearly equalized as possible for all. Both ignorance and class distinctions are fatal to a democracy, and the most advanced thinkers of that day soon realized that the schools afforded the best means of removing these menaces to the welfare of the people.

A leading part in the final movement for free education for all was taken by the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, which was organized in Philadelphia in 1827. Roberts Vaux, the first president of the Board of Control, was also made president of this Society. Fortunately, Pennsylvania had several governors who, during this period, were deeply interested in education. Of these Governor Hiester took a deep interest in securing the advantages of education for as many as possible. He especially com-

mended Philadelphia "For the establishment of schools in which the terms of tuition are greatly reduced, and in which those who are not able to meet the expense are taught gratuitously." Governor George Wolf, in his first inaugural address, also showed his interest in education by commending the legislature that should provide for education "on a scale so broad and extensive as to reach every village and neighborhood." When it is remembered that there were a great many, even among adults, in the State at that time who could neither read nor write, and that schooling was regarded by many as unnecessary, especially for girls, the need for such action is apparent. Upon his re-election in 1832, Governor Wolf again manifested great interest in the schools and efforts were at once made to place education on a better basis. Joseph G. Clarkson, of Philadelphia, who was chairman of the House Committee on Education, made an able report favoring the establishment of a broad system of public education with schools open free to all children of proper age. At the beginning of the session of 1833-34, on motion of Samuel Breck, of Philadelphia, a joint committee of the House and the Senate was appointed "for the purpose of digesting a system of general education for this Commonwealth." The committee obtained "all the information possible from persons engaged in the business of education" and also made a study of the systems in force in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York, where public schools had already been established. As a result of their work they presented a bill, which is said to have been drawn up by Senator Breck, and which was passed with only one dissenting voice. This was in 1834. While there were things in the new law which were "found to be clumsy and inconvenient in practice," and were therefore soon repealed, the fundamental idea of free public schools for all was thereby established and the State committed to an educational policy which has enabled it to rank among the best in the nation.

But the new law did not have smooth sailing. It had many strong friends and worthy advocates, but there were some who had no sympathy with the doctrine of equality upon which the law was founded. They had not outgrown the Old World idea that there are two classes of society, a higher and a lower, and that it is a mistake to endeavor to break down the barrier between the two. There were others who were unwilling to help, through taxation, to pay for the education

of other people's children. They had not the vision to see how, in human society, the welfare of the individual is wrapped up in that of his fellow-men. Nor did they stop to consider what they owed to society for all of the benefits they themselves enjoyed. Those who believed in two classes of people—"the hewers of wood and the drawers of water" and a superior class—held that to educate the "lower class" beyond the mere elements was both unnecessary and apt to render them unhappy. That these were human beings like themselves, and therefore entitled to all of the resources of growth and satisfaction, did not enter their minds. They did not realize that both the safety and the prosperity of the State, and therefore their own, were in direct proportion to the intelligence and breadth of training of every individual in the State. Opposition to the new educational plans and ideals also arose from several religious organizations that had already established schools and from others who were influenced by narrow ideals. It is not surprising therefore that efforts were at once made to have the law repealed. Not only did these efforts fail, but the friends of the law were able to strengthen some of its provisions. This was largely due to the championship of Thaddeus Stevens, who made a plea for the law, when the issue was in doubt in the Assembly, which was "so convincing that the friends of education were brought in solid column to the support of the measure and thus saved the common school system."

Although the cause of the public school triumphed, Governor Wolf, who had been renominated for a third term, was defeated for re-election. Like many another man who has faithfully and fearlessly espoused a good cause, he became a martyr to the great idea of an education for all. He went out, however, with these prophetic words in his last message: "There can be no doubt that as the system advances into more general use and its advantages become more apparent, it will increase in favor with the people generally, but especially with the more liberal-minded and intelligent"—a fact fully demonstrated by the history of public education everywhere, as much of its opposition and lack of support has always arisen from a lack of definite knowledge of the work of the schools and their essential place in human progress.

In 1836 there was a reshaping of the public school law for the State, which left it, in its essentials, practically as it exists to-day. A few notable changes have, however, been made

since that time. The public meetings at which the tax rate for school purposes was fixed are no longer required; holding elections at which people voted "schools" or "no schools" was discontinued in 1848; and the legal school age has been raised from four, as it existed then, to six. But, aside from the fact that the year 1836 marks the real beginning of public schools in the State as we now know them, Philadelphia's main interest in the act consists in its repeal of the portions of the law of 1818 which made the Lancasterian system obligatory in the city and which limited the benefits of the public schools to the children of indigent parents. It also authorized the establishment of the Central High School "for the full education of such pupils of the public schools as may possess the requisite qualifications." This was a decidedly advanced step in public education and showed that, in Philadelphia at least, there were enough advanced thinkers in the Commonwealth to justify the statement of one of the advocates of the law: "In other ages and countries, the lower orders might be confined to the rudiments of knowledge, while the higher branches were dispensed to the privileged classes, in distant and expensive seminaries. But here we have no lower orders. Our statesmen and our higher magistrates, our professional men and our capitalists, our philosophers and our poets, our merchants and our mechanics, all spring alike from the mass."

That the freeing of education and the opening of the high school, had a general stimulating effect upon the public schools is evident from the fact that the attendance leaped in a few years from 7000 to 35,000. This was a triumph of the fact so fully being demonstrated in public education in recent years—namely, that the people will support and take pride in their schools to the extent to which they are convinced that they contain the maximum opportunity for their boys and girls. And that the high school idea was not for the benefit of "aristocrats" only, as was then claimed by some, was clearly shown by an investigation of the principal of the school, Dr. John S. Hart, which revealed the fact that more than 75 per cent. of the entering class were the sons of laborers, porters, conductors, artisans, storekeepers, etc.

The year 1854 was a notable one in the history of the city because, at that time, an act was passed by the Assembly which consolidated all of the districts and townships within the County of Philadelphia with the city proper. This increased the number of sections under the jurisdiction of the

Board of Control to 24, the number of schools to 303, and the number of pupils to 52,073. The number of teachers then employed was 876 and the entire payroll was only $294,316 or an average of $336 per teacher. The average cost per pupil for the year 1854 was $9.16, and the total value of the school-plant was placed at $1,236,823.61. It is interesting to note that "night schools" (evening schools) had already been established and that the Board spent $20,000 upon them that year. The president of the Board at that time, T. G. Hollingsworth, said of those attending these night schools what is even more true of our evening activities under our present city conditions: "How much better that they should be thus engaged, preparing to become useful and respectable citizens, than that they should be attending those other schools, to be found on every corner, where idle young men learn, from experienced teachers, those lessons of vice and crime which bring not only ruin to themselves but irreparable damage and loss to the community."

The Act of Consolidation placed the entire power of levying taxes in the hands of the City Councils. This soon proved a source of irritation and friction between the Board and Councils. As the body controlling the finances always possesses predominating power, Councils from that time were in a position to wield an undue influence upon the policies and practices of the Board. That the friction early became serious is evident from one of the annual reports of Edwin Shippen, who was President of the Board from 1864 to 1869. After complaining of the inability of the Board to secure promised funds with which to carry on the educational work and of the efforts of Councils to interfere with the progressive policies of the Board, he said: "The Councils of the City of Philadelphia have no more right to instruct the Board of School Controllers in respect to educational affairs than has the Board of School Controllers the right to instruct Councils in regard to details of municipal management." It should be added, however, that this condition continued as late as 1906, when the minimum amount that could be appropriated to the schools was fixed at 5 mills, or in reality until 1911, when the Board was given the right to levy and budget its own taxation.

That President Shippen was exceptionally well prepared to represent the best interests of the people in their educational affairs is evident from his educational vision and his advocacy of progressive policies. He realized the desirability

of carefully-prepared school statistics, the importance to the child of a properly developed body, the need of compulsory school attendance, and also the need of expert school supervision. In one of his earliest reports he lamented the fact that Philadelphia, in common with other cities, lacked the educational records and statistics that would furnish a basis for judging of "the practical workings of different school organizations." In his report for 1867 he urged the introduction of "a thorough, simple, and effective system of physical exercises to give children the advantages of healthful exercises, more important even, we are free to say, than any portions of the mental culture." As early as 1865 he advocated compulsory attendance at school. As it was estimated, a few years later, that there were over 20,000 children not attending any school but who were running the streets "in idleness and vagabondism," the need for such a law was evidently great. In regard to expert supervision of the schools, President Shippen said in his report for 1867: "The time has arrived when the huge machinery of the Public School System of Philadelphia requires the most careful action and delicate supervision. . . . The whole system requires a governing hand, one who has experience, tact, and executive ability. . . . Philadelphia alone, of all large cities, is without such supervision. . . . There is no one upon whom is charged the duties and responsibilities of supervising all the schools of Philadelphia as a connected body. . . . And to the want of this office has been attributed, to a considerable degree, many of the imperfections which have been charged against our school system." A committee appointed to consider the subject reported: "No plan of general education, the success of which depends upon the conduct of others, however solicitous these may be in the performance of their duties, can be complete without a supervisory head to recommend to the consideration of the Board such improvements as his own experience, and that of other cities, may from time to time suggest." However, the necessary appropriation for the purpose was not secured until in 1883 when, in the spring of that year, Dr. James McAlister was elected as the first Superintendent of the Public Schools.

President Shippen was greatly annoyed by some who would have wrecked the schools with cheapness and by others who would have blighted them by their carping criticism. But he was especially bitter in his denunciation of secret opposi-

tion. These secret enemies, he said, lose no opportunity by which to impair the usefulness and effectiveness of our schools. "This secret opposition is always dangerous, and must be carefully watched, and openly fought. Among these specious opponents, we find men of intelligence; men who have never been within the walls of a public school edifice, and who are utterly and shamefully ignorant of the instruction, at which their malevolence is cast." While he recognized the imperfection of the schools, he also saw the vital connection between them and the prosperity of the city and between them and the welfare of the nation. Although he was often disappointed at receiving no help in the work from sources from which he had a right to expect it, he believed in the possibilities and ultimate triumph of our democracy through the intelligence upon which it would be firmly established by the thorough education of the masses. Writing in 1866, he uttered words which should be peculiarly significant during our present great European struggle. "The final success of our republican institutions," he said, "will depend, more than all else, upon the success of our republican education; that the triumphant evidence we have just been giving of the strength and stability of those institutions is an evidence, more than all else, . . . of our success in educating the people."

There are many interesting things connected with these early days of our school system. For many years the law required the county auditors to examine the accounts of the Board. That both the Board and the auditors did not always favor the bills presented for payment is clearly shown in the following:

> "The Auditors have examined the objections of the Controllers to Benjamin Martin's account as rendered February 4, 1821; in which he charges 100 dollars 49 cents, for a raising dinner, which exceeded the amount allowed by the Controllers 50 dollars 49 cents; and also Sylvester Roberts's account for printing 1000 copies of an address delivered at Ebenezer Church on the 4th of July last, 3 dollars for printing a Hymn for the same occasion; John Graham's account of 4 dollars for a suit of clothes given to a boy for reciting the Declaration of Independence at same time; and John Allen's of 1 dollar 50 cents for preparing the said church for the

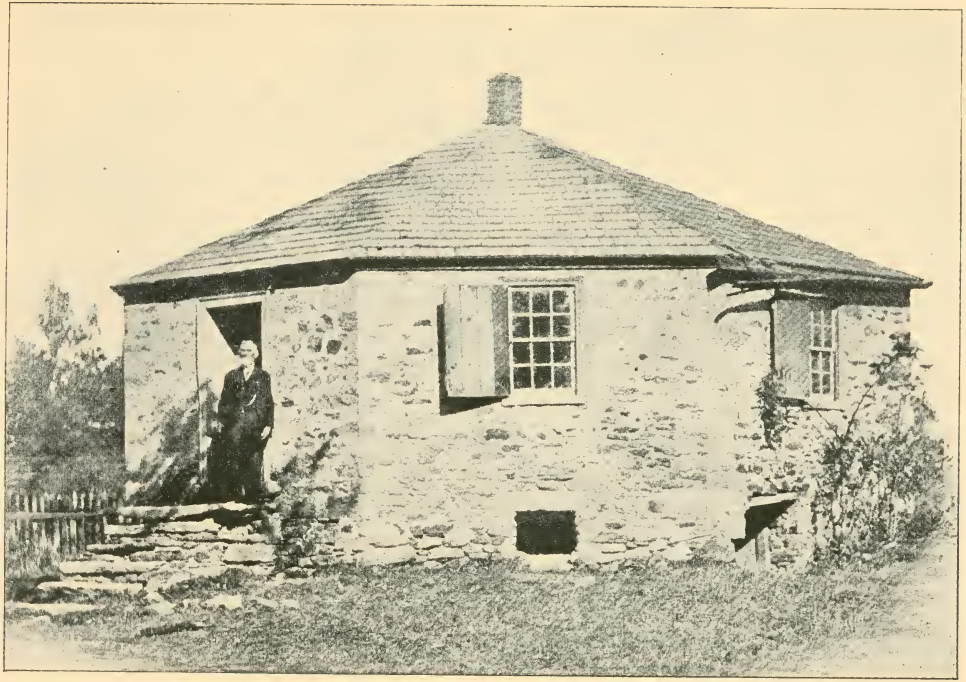
same occasion; and they perfectly coincide with the Controllers in the opinion that the said charges are improper, and cannot be admitted."

On April 16, 1845, the Board of Controllers was given corporate powers under the title of "The Controllers of the public schools of the first school district of Pennsylvania." As a corporate body, they were by this act given legal title to all of the school property then in possession of the Commissioners of the County or of any other person. However, at Consolidation of the City in 1854, these privileges reverted to City Councils, in whose hands it remained until 1911, when the Board was again vested with the full control of its own property.

As an indication of the salaries paid in these early days, the annual report of President Hollingsworth for 1855 shows that, although the pay of teachers had been increased because at existing rates for board, clothing and other necessary expenses "it was found exceedingly difficult for an educated young woman to live decently and comfortably on the salaries named," it still left 198 teachers at a salary of $200 per year and 146 at a salary of $225. This was out of a total of 935 teachers, of whom 9 per cent. were male teachers. At this time the average cost per pupil was $9.16—"a sum not so large as the ordinary cost of books alone in private schools." The average cost per pupil in the high school at that time was $37.72.

In 1867 the appointment of the members of the Board of Control was taken away from the various Boards of Directors and given to the courts, the members so appointed holding, by virtue of their office, full privileges in the Board of Directors of their respective sections. At that time there were 27 members in the Board of Control, 15 of them being appointed by the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, and 12 by the Judges of the District Court.

By an Act of Assembly the name of the Board of Controllers was, in 1869, changed to that of the Board of Public Education, as a more distinctive title. In 1905 there was a general recodification of the school laws of the State, in which the number of members of the Board was reduced from one for each section (the sections corresponding to the city wards), then 42 in all, to 21. At the same time the Boards of Directors of the several school sections or wards, which had been fixed by the law of 1894 at 13 for each section, or



The Fox Chase School, Abington Road

Catharine Street School (Mt. Vernon), North Side of Catharine Street, West of Third

546 in all, were replaced by Boards of School Visitors of 7 members each, elected by the people. At the same time the right to elect teachers and to control their rating was removed from the local authorities and placed on a civil service basis under the control of the Board of Education. This was an important movement in the direction of centralizing authority and the establishment of a merit system for the election and promotion of teachers. In 1911 the Board was given independent control of taxation, within the six-mill limit set by law, as well as independent borrowing power. The size of the Board was at the same time reduced to 15 members. This was done in connection with the remodeling of the 1905 general school law of the State, and has been referred to by the Bureau of Education at Washington as "perhaps the most extensive and radical instance of educational legislation that has ever been accomplished in a single act in this country."

From the small and imperfect beginnings of 1818 has grown a public school system in our city which now enrolls over 230,000 pupils taught by over 6300 teachers in 307 school buildings, and representing in buildings, grounds, and equipment a valuation of over $35,000,000. In the earlier days there was little attempted beyond the imparting of knowledge. The home and community life provided for many of the things which now must be included in the program of the school, or they will not be taught at all. The changed and increasingly complex conditions have thrown a burden on the school that was unknown in former days. To meet these insistent needs the school must now not only impart knowledge but must develop intelligence and adaptability of a high type and also see: (1) that during youth health knowledge and health habits are inculcated; (2) that there is the maximum amount of vocational intelligence and training as a preparation for self-support; (3) that civic duties and responsibilities are as clearly appreciated and accepted as possible; (4) that helpful recreational activities are chosen and provided for, with uplifting ideals and inclination for the use of leisure time as their safe foundation; and (5) that woven through this entire program there shall be a clean and high moral purpose. In addition to this the modern school must care for the physical and moral unfortunates so that they, too, may have the fullest opportunity to outdistance their handicap and find life worth living. The modern school must also reach out into the community and become a great center of com-

munity intelligence and welfare. In brief, the schools of Philadelphia are and must continue increasingly to be the inveterate foe of ignorance, poverty, disease, crime, and all forms of human waste and neglect, and a great fundamental agency for increasing the welfare and influence of our City, State, and Nation.

To carry on this important work the Board of Public Education has provided Kindergarten classes, for children from three to five years of age; Elementary schools, for from six to eight years of instruction in the fundamentals of knowledge and training; Junior high schools, for the first three years of a secondary education, during which the work of the elementary school is applied and extended in a most helpful way; Senior high schools, for three or four years of a more definite and scientific preparation for life; a large number of free scholarships to institutions of higher learning; Teacher-training schools, where two and a half years of professional training is given as a preparation for teaching; Continuation schools, both day and evening—the day continuation schools providing eight hours' instruction per week for those between the ages of 14 and 16 who are in employment, and the evening schools providing evening instruction, both elementary and high, for those beyond the age of 16 who desire to improve their education, as well as for the foreign-born who may desire to learn the English language; Special classes for backward, crippled, anæmic, or tubercular children for whom there are separate schools; Cooking classes and Sewing classes, where the domestic arts so essential to the making and keeping of a good home are taught; Handwork classes and Shop-work classes, in which the foundations of vocational training are laid; and School garden and Home garden classes, in which are taught many of the things in connection with food production and food conservation that we are now finding so vital to our welfare, as well as a knowledge and love for flowers and flower-raising. Music and drawing are taught as part of the regular daily program and with the strong underlying purpose of introducing the boys and girls to the rich storehouses of art for their fuller æsthetic and spiritual enjoyment. Physical training is systematically given as a means of developing a strong and enduring body, a healthy attractive carriage, and for the correction of many bodily defects. Warm lunches are provided at cost in all of the higher schools and in many of the elementary. The Board also main-

tains careful Medical Inspection of the schools, both as a means of preventing the spread of contagion and for the discovery and correction of remediable physical defects; a Compulsory Attendance department that cares for both truancy and the truant, and which also has charge, under the law, of granting working certificates; and a system of School playgrounds that after school and during vacations affords a better place to play than the street. Many valuable Community Meetings are also being held in the school buildings, although the community use of the school has far greater possibilities than have, as yet, been provided for.

This, in a general way, indicates the activities and purposes of our Philadelphia public school system. It is not intended to indicate that school accommodations and equipment are as adequate as they should be nor that there is not room for improvement and enlargement along all lines. But more and better school buildings, larger school yards, and enlarged activities mean additional expense; and the funds of the Board are limited. There must be full value received from every dollar spent in the schools, but as some one has tersely said, "A school system that is not costing a great deal these days is not worth a great deal." And it still remains true that the entire annual cost per pupil for public instruction in Philadelphia represents a sum not much larger than the ordinary cost of books and other materials alone where instruction has to be paid for.

With its modern safe and sanitary school buildings, many of them representing an expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars each, with equipment and supplies well adapted to the work, and with teachers and methods repreeenting the best in modern educational training and thought, the public schools of Philadelphia to-day are in marked contrast to those attended by boys and girls of a hundred years ago. To the work of enlargement and the improvement of these schools we all should dedicate our best efforts; for they represent for our young people not only the heritage of the past, but also the opportunities of the present and the vision and hope of the future. The great European conflict is forcing a tremendous readjustment of human thought and practice. It is rapidly setting aside that which no longer meets the needs of the day, and proving that things which are cheap and small have no place in modern educational thought. We are thinking more and more in terms of the big things of life—of the

things that go far beyond the daily task and which put a larger purpose and meaning into life. May we all measure up to the demands of this new day, in our ideals, in our practice, but especially in a sincere interest in the welfare of the young people whose destinies are being shaped in our public schools. This is not only our duty to them and to the community and State we are endeavoring to serve, but also an opportunity for the highest form of service that human society has to offer.

JOHN P. GARBER.

Philadelphia, April 6, 1918.

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